



SDG 3:
Illicit Drug Use and Policies

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Introduction

- The drug crisis our country faces today is unprecedented. It has evolved over the past several decades and has steadily worsened with time. Every state and county, and every socioeconomic group in our country, is directly affected by the negative consequences of illicit drug use.
- The use of illicit drugs in today's world has become a trend among young and old people. Drugs are glorified in popular video games such as Grand Theft Auto, on social media there is a challenge related to an upcoming rapper's death involving Percocet pills. Rappers glorify drinking lean and there are frequently stories in the news about celebrities and cocaine.
- Abuse of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs is costly to our Nation, exacting more than \$740 billion annually in costs related to crime, lost work productivity and health care.

MOST USED ILLICIT DRUGS



- Most Popular Drugs of Abuse
- By number of users:
- Marijuana (19.8 million)
- Prescription drugs (6.5 million nonmedical users)
- Cocaine (1.5 million)
- Hallucinogens, including Ecstasy (1.3 million)
- Methamphetamine (around 595,000)
- Heroin (around 300,000)

Illicit drug use 2018 versus 2019

2017

- In 2017, more than 70,000 people died from drug overdoses, making it a leading cause of injury-related death in the United States. Of those deaths, almost 68% involved a prescription or illicit opioid.

2018

- In 2018 alone, 47,600 fatal overdoses occurred in America which involved at least one opioid.

CURRENT FINDINGS

- The use of illicit drugs is as prevalent today as it was during the crack epidemic of the 1980's. About 38% of adults in 2018 battled an illicit drug use disorder ranging from heroin, cocaine, marijuana and Methamphetamines. Approximately 5 million Americans regularly use cocaine. In recent years 1 out of 5 overdose- related fatalities was associated with cocaine. Approximately 966,000 American adults struggled with a cocaine use disorder (CUD) in 2018. Hardcore drugs such as Methamphetamines (crystal meth, ice) are currently used by approximately 897,000 teenagers and adults in America.

ILLICIT DRUG USE POLICIES

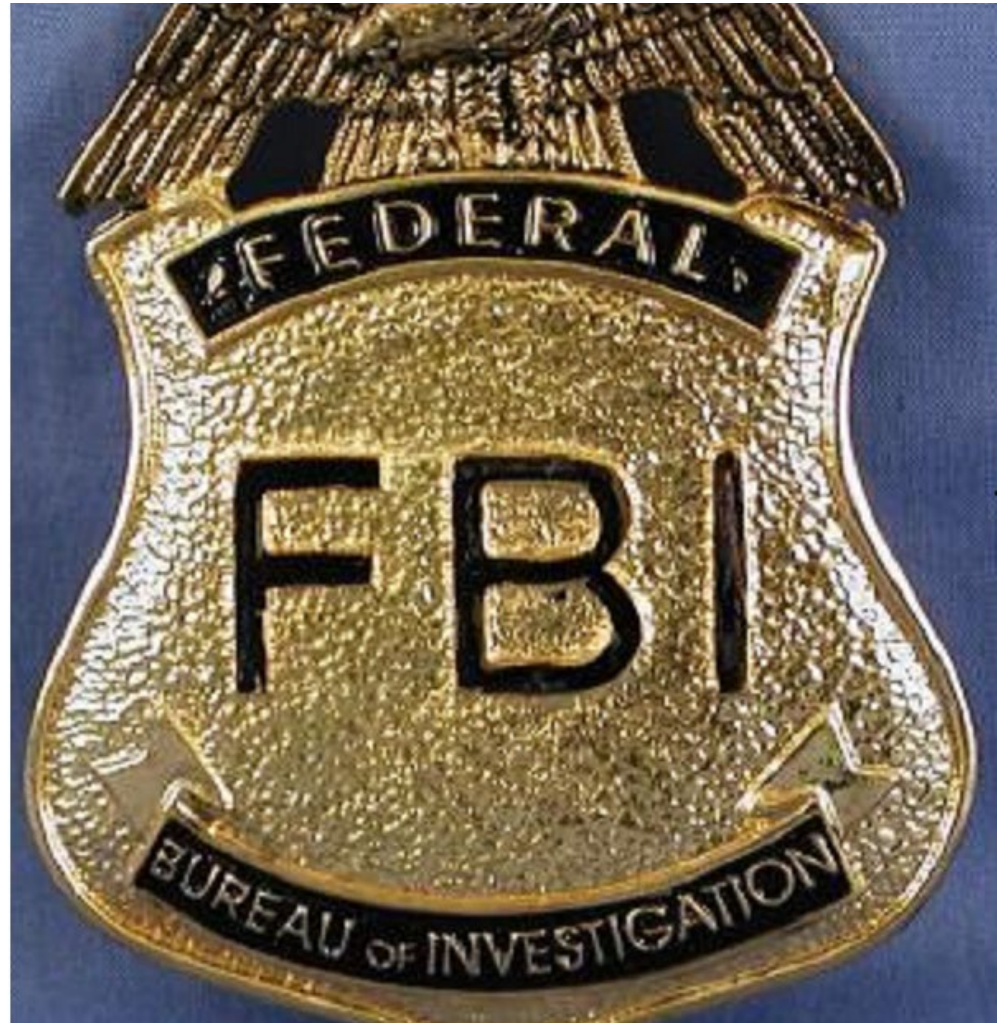
The government has implanted numerous initiatives to combat the prevalence of illicit drug use.

- Implementation of overdose education and naloxone distribution programs to issue naloxone directly to opioid users and potential bystanders.
- Diverting individuals with substance use disorders/issues to Drug Courts.
- Expansion of access to MAT (Medication Assisted Treatment).
- Educational initiatives delivered in school and community settings

- What I found interesting about this topic is the number of people especially young people that have used or are currently using hardcore drugs such as cocaine, heroin & Methamphetamines. Young people, teenagers aged 12-17 are bypassing traditional starter drugs such as marijuana and going straight to hardcore drugs and becoming addicted at alarmingly increasing rates. Approximately 741,000 teenagers suffered from an illicit substance use disorder in 2017, nearly 3% of children in this age range suffer from an illicit drug use disorder. This topic was also interesting to me because of the military side rates of illicit drug use increase when active duty personnel leave military service. Marijuana accounts for the vast majority of illicit drug use among veterans with 3.5% reporting use, and 1.7% reporting use of illicit drugs other than marijuana in a 1-month period.

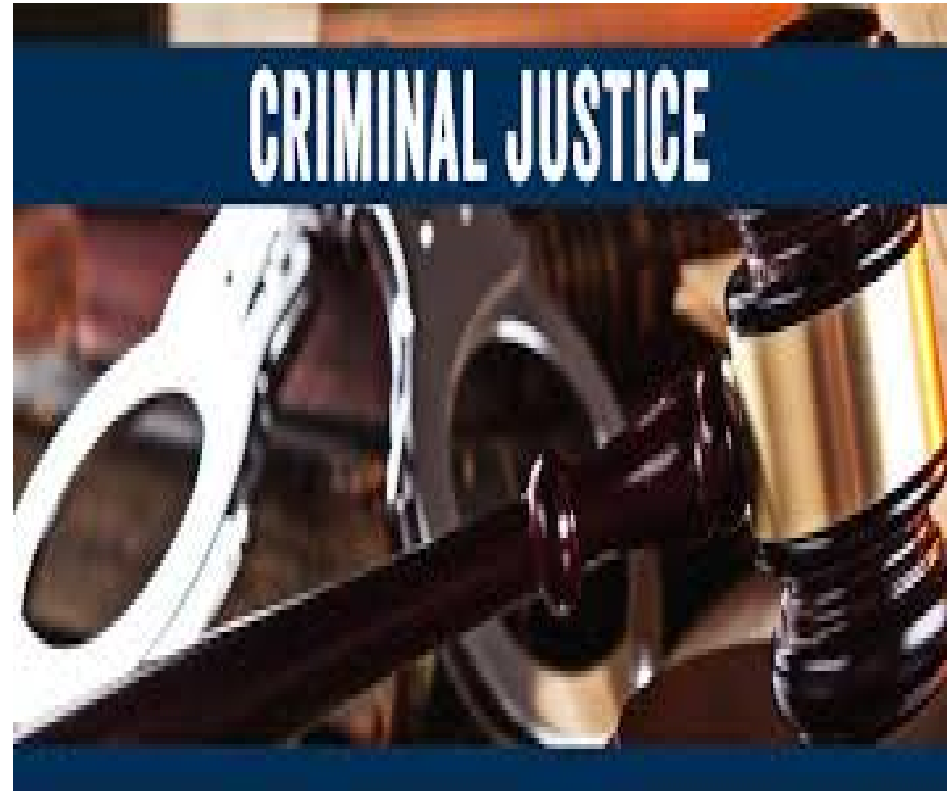
Future Endeavors

- What I would like to do in the future is use my future degree in criminal justice and my experience in military intelligence to obtain a job in a federal law enforcement agency (FBI, DEA , ATF, CBP) to combat the use, sale and transportation of illegal drugs. I would like to work within the community on outreach programs like a program called D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) that would educate the youth and others on the dangerous of illicit drugs.



Reason this topic interested me

- I was interested in this topic because drugs are everywhere and easily accessible. I was curious to see the statistics of drug use amongst the younger population because drugs are so common in today's world. Being a criminal justice major this subject is the core of the job.



PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

- David F. (Friend, Marijuana smoker)- He believed smoking marijuana was not harmful as long as it was used in small quantities and did not effect your everyday life, productivity. Compared to alcohol and cocaine the risk associated with marijuana use is miniscule. There are medicinal uses for marijuana such as treating Glaucoma and the after effects of chemotherapy. Felt marijuana should be legalized everywhere.
- Friend (Cocaine user)- He believes cocaine is a stronger form of Adderall. Cocaine gives him a boost of energy, a sense of heightened awareness, the ability to perform tasks quickly, effectively and a higher sex drive. “Cocaine can be used as a topical anesthetic for surgical procedures due to its rapid-acting numbing properties.” Felt the laws and consequences for using and getting caught with cocaine should be reduced. He stated cocaine is consumed at the highest echelons of society (Doctors, Athletes, Celebrities, etc.).
- Von B. (Brother, Alcoholic)- He uses alcohol as a means of stress relief when he has a bad day or a long shift at work. He like my friend David believes alcohol consumed in moderation or a low amount is not an issue as long as you have the tolerance. He believes laws such as drinking in public should be decriminalized, some people perform tasks better while inebriated.

Differences & Similarities

- What was similar about each of their responses was the fact that each person was consuming either an illegal drug or a substance when consumed in excess could lead to dangerous behavior, death or incarceration but the fact that all three people pointed out the “so-called” benefits, medicinal uses for their substance of choice.
- What was different was each person interviewed favored a different substance and when I asked them about the other two drugs favored by the people interviewed they did not agree with the benefits or reasons offered for consuming that particular substance.

Sustainable Development Goal # 3 (Good health and well being)

- Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.
- By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.
- SDG 3 is working towards potentially reducing the number of people abusing narcotics, increasing drug programs, awareness and reducing the number of road traffic accidents in which some are likely caused by drunk drivers.



CONCLUSION

- In conclusion I feel parents, communities, schools and the government need to do a better job in educating and combatting the use and sale of illicit drugs. In today's world it is easier to obtain a gram of coke & lb. of marijuana than it is a decent paying job.

References

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